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**CULTURE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

African economies are in difficulty. Most of them are models of blocked development. Economic depression is almost widespread; decline, which is a threat everywhere, is already a fact in about half of the countries in the continent. In this context, the ongoing globalization promises to be more of an ordeal than a chance.

Several weaknesses are implicated in this crisis. The weakness of indigenous entrepreneurship is mentioned among the main causes, often not without reason. Creative imagination, innovation, maintenance and management of the existing enterprises are often shaky. They are sometimes in unskilled hands, often under the responsibility of motivated people, but generally in an unfavourable African socio-cultural context.

Culture is, in some respects, implicated. That is the case with regard to the cardinal values of civilization. The same applies to attitudes and reflexes. These values, attitudes and reflexes are largely inspired by some old continental civilizations that slavery and colonization have no doubt strongly shaken but hardly replaced. The reasons for existence and action have not yet completely lost their roots in the precapitalist system; but they are not yet entrenched in the capitalist system. The old framework of lifelong solidarity has not disintegrated completely; the new framework of capitalist individualism has not completely moved in.

Africa is in transition. In this transition the attitudes, reflexes, choices, and the values that support them, remain tragically ambiguous and ambivalent. The socio-cultural systems are nevertheless not fixed. They are moving, particularly under the impetus of emerging needs and the youth. They are headed for breaks, but the time frame cannot be known. However, some significant cultural shifts can be observed, in successive waves. While these are moving in all directions, they nonetheless show a definite trend towards breaks.

These shifts toward salutary breaks must be encouraged through voluntarist action. It is necessary to move towards the "inculturation" of values, attitudes and reflexes of entrepreneurship. It is not so much a question of rationality, but rather of choice, creative initiative, innovation and the quality of management.

Inculturation efforts are recommended at several levels: i) at the school level where the young ones are targeted through the teachers and educators; ii) at the level of the enterprises and the administration where practising adult entrepreneurs (or candidates for the position of entrepreneurs) are targeted as beneficiaries of retraining and preparation; iii) at the political level where systematic lobbying activities are essential, especially as regards bills passed in Parliament; iv) at the level of civil society where opinion leaders, trade unions, employers' associations and the "clubs of managers" are targeted by activities relating to sensitization on the need for and the challenges of cultural breaks in favour of the values of entrepreneurship and development management.

National programmes can be set up to this end with, in each concrete situation, some adjustments to ensure their effectiveness.

CULTURE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

Africa is a broken-down continent, economically and socially. The humanitarian dimension of Africa's problems is becoming increasingly disturbing. Since the failure of stabilization plans, structural adjustment programmes and democratization efforts in the 1980s, conflicts of identity and wars have broken out, adding their ravages to those of the aids pandemic. Poverty, insecurity, mortality and debility have become more intense and more widespread, while the continent has incurred debts beyond its means and experienced a drop in its share of trade and investment in the world. With a few exceptions, the destiny of the whole continent is shaky and despair is setting in.

Over and above numerous short-term explanations specific to each country, there are serious deficiencies in the areas of entrepreneurship and management in Africa. African economies are almost all considered to be among the least well managed in the world. Africans are reputed to be the least inspired, the least trained and the least equipped entrepreneurs. African leaders are thought to be unorthodox and dishonest political managers whose economic choices are often highly debatable.

This harsh judgment is already cast into the mould of a solid conviction in the public opinion, as well as among the highest international authorities. Indeed, many institutions and individuals conversant with African issues believe that entrepreneurial and management difficulties constitute the top challenge facing the continent. Africa is seen as timid and clumsy in entrepreneurship. Africans are reportedly bad managers at all levels.

Corrective reactions were not long coming; they were many and came from all sides. Over the past forty years, various kinds of programmes, projects, aid, support and assistance have been designed and implemented with the aim of providing support for "creative initiatives" and management. Three levels of action are targeted: local communities through the NGOs, the business world within the framework of employers' associations and chambers of commerce, and the State through various types of technical and institutional support for macroeconomic management.

With the increased awareness of the African challenge throughout the world since the publication, in 1979, of the Berg Report on development in Africa, the mobilization has accelerated. UNDP, the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, FAO, UNIDO, and many other international agencies and institutions have drawn closer to the concerns of the ILO. In the projects and programmes of these institutions, technical and management training is an essential and henceforth common objective. This component is justified in all the programmes either by the need for "institutional development" or by the concern for "capacity building". With the support of UNDP, the World Bank even established the AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION in 1991 (based in Harare), which has since then been a powerful point of convergence for cooperation efforts in this area. An impressive number of management training institutes have been set up in each country, accompanied generally by substantial funding and technical assistance.

In spite of this mobilization, however, it does not appear yet that there is a movement towards mitigation of the challenge. No matter how diversified or determined they may be, efforts aimed at ensuring the progress of entrepreneurship and management in Africa seem to come up against a sort of structural ceiling of which the height and contours *seem to be closely related to the very culture of Africans*.

"African culture" is implicated. Or, to be more precise, the various local cultures, which are thought to have been tacked on to - or rubbed shoulders for a long time with - the old civilization of Sub-Saharan Africa, are said to hinder the development of an entrepreneurial and managerial culture. The African continent has thus supposedly missed the opportunity to quickly and profitably join the modern industrial civilization. Therefore, the technical and managerial skills in which Africa officials have been "very laboriously" trained in their thousands, are reportedly taking a long time to become attitudes, aptitudes and reflexes of economic creativity and rationality. Thus, the enthusiasm and the passion for institutes that breed entrepreneurs and schools of management may decline throughout the continent, adding to the despair and fatalism.

That is the situation at the beginning of the third millennium.

The bill of indictment against "the African managerial culture" is massive and appears to be final. In a complex and moving world, such a bill of indictment must have something very imprecise about it. Somehow, it must be based on confusion. It needs to be analyzed and even trimmed down. Putting the cultural issue in an equation requires more rigour and discernment. The issue - it must be admitted - is a complex and sensitive one. It is so much related to the dignity of peoples and the respectability of cultures that foreigners who give a thought to it very often confine themselves to vague and polite statements, whatever their ill-feelings about the dishonesty, negligence, corruption and improvisations that characterize the daily management of affairs in Africa.

Those who observe Africa from outside have acquired the habit of being oblique in words while they strongly condemn deep down. In the continent, some Africans are massively "for" such condemnation. Others are "against", just as massively. Our science is not able to decide, or even to propose the putting in an equation, in a rigorous manner, of the cultural issue in relation to the failures of the development process. Our best economists are very mediocre in "cultural matters", and are even quite proud of that. Our eminent sociologists dwell at length on the description of the "unprecedented" aspects of our societies in transition between tradition and modernity. Our most brilliant "specialists in cultural matters" have put economics into the jumble of residual issues or, on the contrary, into the category of enigmas reserved for the initiated.

This paper has three objectives:

- i) to explore the content and the contours of the much talked-about African cultural background, bearing in mind the requirements of entrepreneurship and the dictates of development management in Africa;
- ii) to propose the putting into an equation of the "cultural issue" with regard to the dictates of development
- iii) to identify the probable developments and a strategy for action against fatalistic inclinations.

2. CONTENT AND CONTOURS OF A CULTURE

It is pointless and exasperating to try to define "culture" outside a specific set of issues. The notion of culture is indeed most complex and most comprehensive, and its general definitions are most ineffective. Philosophers know how unpopular they are because of their appalling generalities on the issue.

It is necessary, however, to know what one is talking about when faced with the "cultural issue" in the struggle for development. One must at some point go through the humiliation of the debate on concepts.

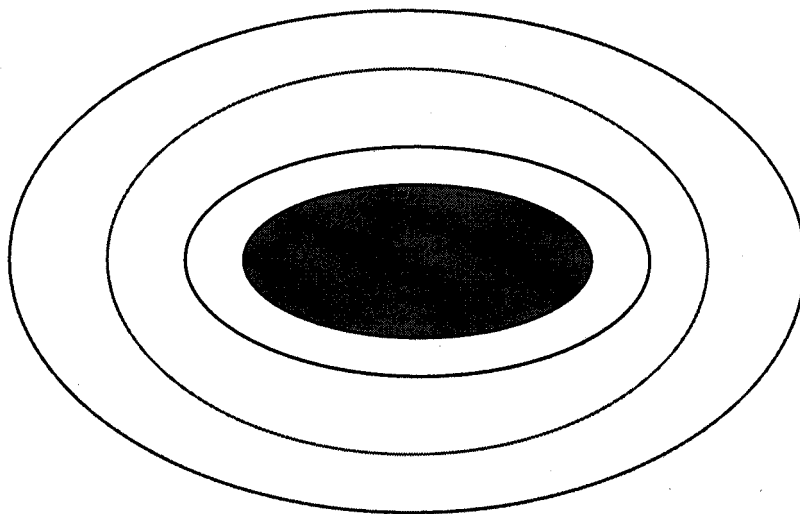
In all its determinations and trappings, the univers of man's existence and actions is permeated with culture. Three main functions are assigned to it in all places and at all times:

- a) culture is the *matrix* that incorporates and totals all the realities perceived;
- b) it is also the vector that orients and gives meaning to all existence and all practice;
- c) it is, finally, an order, a hierarchy in which, put into context, objects and choices, facts and events, the present and the future, assume, in relation to one another, their specific weights and their particular heights, their explanations and their justifications, etc.

In relation to the issue of development, it is improbable that culture can be implicated identically in all the three functions. It is probable, on the contrary, that there are some functions where it is more responsible, and that there are others where it is necessarily less so.

To make things clearer, let us imagine, as below, the different functions of culture by using the technique of diagrams. Let us adopt a method of representation in different concentric circles.

Fig. 1 : Diagram of various internal determinations of a culture



Let us take some time to explain this diagram, from the inside towards the outside, concentric circle by concentric circle.

First Level. The nucleus of every culture (shown above by the smallest circle) is occupied by all the characteristic values of this culture. It is a coherent system principles in the name of which existence and action take on a meaning in the eyes of the community. Conversely, short of or beyond these principles, existence and action have no meaning any more: only death and inactivity have a meaning. In society, conduct and judgment are based on this system of principles, whether in the case of individuals or groups.

These values which justify life as well as conduct are widely shared among the different civilizations in history. They are values like dignity, honour, justice, solidarity, on which are based life, the conduct of life, common sense and judgment.

However, from one civilization to another, values are not given in an identical order. On the contrary, they are interrelated in a hierarchy that is more or less stable, more or less rigid, but divided into *two distinct segments between which the elements are not interchangeable*.

On the first segment, cultural values are of a sacred nature. They constitute their own justification, their own *raison d'être*: They give meaning and direction to life. Conversely, life ceases to have any meaning and direction without them. They act as benchmarks for all and in everything; they are the ultimate reference in the face of all scourges and all challenges. These leading values are the "cardinal values of civilization". They bind civilizations together and serve as labels for them; they lose their internal hierarchy when these civilizations fall. Thus, the transition from one civilization to another is accompanied by a shift in the vision of the world, in the cosmogony or the Weltanschauung.

On the second segment are found the values of secondary importance. They are known as "instrumental values". They do not carry in themselves their own justification; this justification is based entirely on their usefulness in maintaining and consolidating the "cardinal values of civilization". Logically, the secondary values are modulated and interconnected under the authority of the cardinal values. For example, science and technology are secondary values, always and everywhere used as instrumental values. Their use is commanded - and modulated - by the nature and acuteness of the challenges to be met; that is, by the operational implications of the projects that individuals and groups adopt in response to these challenges, on the basis of the cardinal values that govern them.

Second Level. The second concentric circle around the nucleus bears, in a more or less stable hierarchy, all the characteristic *symbols* of each culture. The symbols are nothing other than the cardinal values themselves, but in a tangible form of emblems and totems. Flags, pennants, natural sites, sacred forests, monuments, animal species, certain social functions, certain lines of descent, ... are all objects, positions or species that call for absolute respect. They are the incarnation of some abstract cardinal value; as such, they are inviolable and venerable.

No lasting human grouping is conceivable without a common code of life, conduct and judgment. Similarly, no human society can be envisaged without symbols. Revolutions, particularly in Europe and Asia, may proclaim the death of fetishism in the symbols they overthrow; they all eventually embody their new revolutionary ideals in new symbols, and impose the worship of them.

Third Level. The third circle of the above diagram includes all rites. These involve a system of prescriptions relating to places and times, the quality of the officiants, the type of clothes, attitudes, the words and gestures that individuals and groups must respect if they want to validate any of their acts - and to give them a specific meaning. Legal procedures and religious rituals, for example, belong to this category. Daily life is awash with ritual: to validate the act of greeting, one moves one's head, bends one's right knee, stretches out one's right hand or utters a conventional phrase. Greeting, for example, is a mix of attitudes, gestures and words such as prescribed by a given culture. Outside these prescriptions, no act has the meaning of a greeting.

A ritual is much more than a mere convention arbitrarily cobbled together. It goes beyond symbolism; it concerns, at the very heart of culture, some cardinal value of civilization. Through the ritual of greeting, for example, individuals give mutual guarantees of their feelings of solidarity or their good feelings towards one another. The absence of this ritual is also a message: that of indifference or, in the worst case, of antipathy, insult or hostility. Therefore, every culture has its *semiology*.

Fourth Level. The last circle (peripheral in the above diagram) includes creations, projections and artistic expressions. Our whims, our fantasies, our hallucinations, our virtual representations, our inclinations and our sensations, which develop as they come into contact with the real, may eventually be materialized on a support. The novel, the tale, the fable, the dream, the vision, materialized by speech, writing, song, choreography or some form recorded on a support, stem from the creative activity of the human mind. These objects belong to art. They are the result of the free activity of the mind. Indeed, the latter combines, in infinity of ways, the endless number of sensations produced on each human being by an infinite number of forms of the real. Art is akin to culture. It encompasses all the shades of liberties that human beings can afford to take with the real: it is the creation of the unprecedented, the projection and expression of what exists.

Art is science, sometimes. It is so, in any case, when the content of the representation of the real in the mind is objectively in line with this real. It is so when this content transcends the specific context of all tangible experiences. This particular art known, as science is an integral part of culture. It has another peculiarity: that of endeavouring to resolve only issues that have a meaning, that is, those that are duly validated in the light of some cardinal principle of civilization.

That is thus, in a nutshell, the content of a culture, of any culture. Those are also the different compartments and contours of a culture, any culture. Beliefs, attitudes, projections, expectations and reflexes of human beings form part of this universe.

Even the freedom of the human mind is a fact of culture. By the mere fact that it is defined as the negation of any cultural determinism, freedom forms part of culture, just as the shadow sticks to its object: through an inverted symmetrical image. To idealize it - as is often done - amounts to putting it back at the heart of the cardinal values (at the centre of any culture) after stripping it of all the ritual and symbolic contingencies.

Idealizing freedom can therefore mean everything except to put it back into a cultural vacuum. Even in the imagination of the most fundamentalist of liberals who are trying to keep the whole world dreaming, freedom is inseparable from its cultural coating, namely symbols,

rites and popular imagery. It is with this artificially sterilized concept that we have adopted, wrongly, the habit of associating two other concepts at the heart of the African debate: entrepreneurship and management.

3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 A Question of Culture

Neither of these two concepts excludes culture. To be an entrepreneur is to decide to do something; it means to prepare a project and embark on its implementation. Entrepreneurship therefore involves a conscious content, a precise commitment and a definite practice. It involves a project, a framework for its implementation and a recurrent activity geared to the materialization of the project.

Thus all cultures have their "entrepreneurs".

Without distinction, entrepreneurs perform the following functions: imagine or create from nothing some unprecedented realities (opportunities, objects, procedures, relations, modes) and endeavour to disseminate these innovations within a new, stabilized framework, namely the enterprise. An obsession is responsible for psychotic tension in the mind of an entrepreneur; technical know-how transforms the latter into a manager by putting the project into the process of its daily implementation.

Ethnology has formally established the fact that this dual modality of human action is universal. It is common to all cultures. Since the earliest human society in history, there has been no culture without psychotic tension at the level of individuals or groups, without existential anxiety. How can a culture keep the promise of its own longevity without a project or management?

Entrepreneurship and management are constituent dimensions of the human species. Paleontology has bequeathed to us the concepts of homo habilis, homo faber... and even homo economicus.

The « cultural issue » of Africa's development seems to hinge on the concept of homo economicus. According to the worst hypothesis, the African is the opposite of this kind of fauna. In the best case, he is supposed to be a preliminary sketch thereof, which needs to be perfected. The worst hypothesis is in line with the order of nature, « fixed » in the genes: the African case is thus supposed to be hopelessly without a solution. The best hypothesis for Africa places the challenge in the context of culture, a « reshapable element»: Africa's development is thus possible, through the « rationalization of individual and group behaviour » concerning the meaning of projects and the principles of management.

All those who, like me, insist on revisiting the « cultural issue », fall under the second hypothesis, as the debate is of course closed under the first assumption. For the ongoing debate, the cultural issue is therefore that of the rationality of projects, with regard to their nature and their day-to-day management.

3.2. A challenge of rationality?

Rationality separates the various cultures. Not in terms of intensity – some cultures being more rational than others! – but rather in terms of the orientation that concrete projects give to their existence. In reality, each culture evaluates, from within, the choices of individuals, groups and leaders. Choices that are consistent with the cardinal values are rational. Choices that run counter to these values are irrational.

Among these, projects leading to collective suicide are – it should be noted straight away – absolutely irrational.

The China of the Ts' in (in the 3rd century) and the Ming (between the 15th and 17th centuries) which built its well-known walls, is no more (or less) rational than Pharaonic Egypt which built pyramids on graves (3rd millennium before our era), the Europe that built cathedrals (between the 7th and 18th centuries), or the America of the 21st century which is planning to set up a huge missile defense system. Modern Senegal is not more rational with the Manantali dam than the Monomotapa Kingdom with its castles and its walls, or the Kingdom of the Netherlands with its gigantic dykes on the Atlantic.

Furthermore, it is very common to establish a hierarchy of rationalities concerning the different degrees of enrichment, or scientific performance, or technological prowess. Kuwait is supposedly more « rational » than Guatemala, Japan more than Germany, or Croesus more than Samori Touré, the rest of the world more than the African continent. This is a regrettable optical illusion leading to comparisons that verge on the ridiculous. And yet the public imagination, in the wake of the productivist – acquisitive ideology, has such unshakeable convictions.

The real debate on rationality concerns the operationalization of projects. On this point, mankind shares an identical approach. Every human action is a finalized action: it has a reason, a meaning, a purpose, induced means and several possible procedures. Operationalization consists in choosing from the alternative means and possible processes, and making use of them through a process comprising an ordered series of manipulations. Every operationalization of human activity responds to three universal requirements: effectiveness, efficiency and consistency.

Effectiveness is the requirement of conformity of the result with the purpose. Efficiency consists of a dual requirement of a strictly quantitative nature: on the one hand, minimization of the cost in terms of the means and time involved and, on the other hand, maximization of the result obtained. Finally, consistency is the requirement of logical non-contradiction among the various choices made, and among the various manipulations involved: no choice should annihilate the effect of another choice; no manipulation should wipe out the result of a previous manipulation. Logical consistency therefore requires the operationalization to be a gradual process geared to the product not only in its totality, but also in each of its multiple basic manipulations.

No human activity is exempt from these three requirements: all our daily acts are subject to them. Men of all times, all societies and all cultures rationally operationalize all their projects, whatever the status and the importance. Africa and the African are equally concerned. Moreover, the whole of the living world bows to these three requirements, without exception, be it the plant kingdom or the animal kingdom ». This applies to even to the formation of crystals in the mineral kingdom.

René Descartes can be paraphrased here to great effect: « rationality is the best shared thing in the world, because everyone thinks he has so much of it that even those who are the most difficult to satisfy in all other things do not usually desire more of it than they have. Therefore, it is not likely that Africa and Africans are devoid of it, or have received less of it . but rather it shows that the power to conduct our projects effectively, efficiently and coherently – which is indeed what is called rationality – is naturally equal in all men; and thus inequality in wealth does not come from the fact that some are more rational than others, but only from the fact that we conduct our affairs in different ways and do not consider the same purposes.

No. Africa and Africans are not liable guilty of any offence in the form of irrationality. ; they are not faced with challenge of rationality. The « cultural issue ” lies elsewhere, as far development is concerned. It lies entirely in the distinction made by each culture between « *cardinal values of civilization* ” and the “ instrumental values ».

4. MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THINGS

Every system – be it cultural – always strives for equilibrium. Every culture tries relentlessly, in the wake of countless daily acts, to ensure both the management of people and the administration of things. The equilibrium between the two compartments of social activity is essential. It is sought and ensured by respecting the cardinal values of civilization which, in each person’s mind and throughout the social system, give legitimacy to every project by defining its purpose, giving meaning to it and determining its direction.

Admittedly, there are– and there will always be – some projects outside the norm in every culture. However, devoid of all legitimacy, such projects are pure « folly ”: they are either resolutely oriented to a past that is no longer culturally relevant, or completely geared to a future that nothing in the culture makes possible to envisage. They are therefore retrograde, or revolutionary. They cannot in any case be described as irrational: that would be a regrettable misnomer.

Almost all the cultures that today govern traditional Africa (influencing minds, giving legitimacy and meaning to existence and actions, validating all practices, consolidating ties of solidarity and proposing a peculiar reading of the universe) are vestiges of the past shouldering under the ashes of two or three old civilizations of the continent. These have had a common feature: that of seeing in the vital energy of man two highly important realities: i) the main engine of every action, including every productive activity; and ii) the first limiting factor in the operationalization of any project. Indeed, the performance of the pastoral civilization (including long distance trade), the agricultural civilization and the civilizations of gatherers (including hunting and fishing) depended – and still depends - in the quantity and quality of the men involved in production. At the level of societies or groups, economic power depends first and foremost on the experience and adroitness of such people. In pastoral societies, such power depends entirely on the quantity and self-reproductive capacity of the herds. In agricultural societies, it lies in the abundance, quality and frequency of the harvests. Finally, in societies of gatherers, it finds expression in the accessibility, quantity and diversity of the natural crop.

All these factors underlying economic power (or lack of it) have always depended - and continue to depend - on subjective data. The more a society is endowed with it (in large numbers and of excellent quality), the more powerful it is economically, politically and militarily. The more it lacks them (in quantity and quality), the less power it has. For example, major political entities and powerful organizations that were established in Africa were found in densely populated areas.

All the cultures in these places, in accordance with their cardinal values of civilization, ensured as a matter of priority the security, multiplication and technical training of people. The extended production and reproduction of people and their integration into the solid links of lifelong solidarity determined the survival of individuals and groups, as well as the equilibrium of the society itself. It is in this context that all social projects acquire their legitimacy and meaning. The extended reproduction of people, their protection and their security thus become the elements that cement the ties of solidarity and the ultimate justification of all efforts. On the other hand, all human projects that deviate from them or oppose them are pure folly. They are retrograde or revolutionary. Either way, they are a threat to the equilibrium and survival of the community.

These old civilizations have left vestiges that are still powerful in the African mind in a diffuse and hardly perceptible form of beliefs and taboos, attitudes and reflexes.

Entrepreneurship and management therefore mean, in the subconscious of a section of Africa, designing projects that are consistent with the dictates of lifelong solidarity. The operationalization of such projects is nonetheless within the framework of the common rationality of the entire living world. For example, many current African leaders do not hesitate to allocate substantial resources of the State to projects related to solidarity in the narrow sense (ethnic, tribal or regional) from which they emanated and to which they feel indissociably linked. There are specific words for describing such management: tribalism, ethnicism, regionalism and often irrationality.

The term « irrationality » has been imported into such a context, often in an unexpected and unjustified manner. It is used to mean that public resources are used in a manner that is inconsistent with objectives defined within the geographical and social confines of the modern state, that they are « diverted » or even « wasted ». Such judgment is biased in favour of one cultural system to the detriment of another. In reality, there is an overlap and ambiguity of two different kinds of solidarity, of two separate cultural frameworks.

There is the narrow framework of ethnic (or clan, or regional) solidarity where budgetary resources are allocated in favour of precolonial solidarity geared to the management of people. There is also the broader (national) framework where, on the contrary, the same resources are supposedly allocated to projects aimed at the accumulation of wealth. In this case, it is capitalist accumulation, through which the management of states in Africa purports to be justified only by the need for « development ». « **Development** » in this case should be understood to mean the process of deployment and redeployment of a profit-oriented economy. This means the administration of things.

Modern African States thus span the « antediluvian » system of management of people and the « new » system of administration of things. From the strict cultural point of view, two systems are competing for the allegiance of people and the allocation of resources. They do

not differ in terms of rationality, since both of them are rational to a large extent. These systems are, however, distinct in terms of purposes; their own cardinal values give rise to and legitimize different projects, and assign to the same projects different purposes, modes of operation and beneficiaries.

To put it clearly, Africa is navigating between two competing systems of culture, the retrograde system of management of people and the (revolutionary?) administration of things. The reasons for existence and action have not yet completely lost their roots in the precapitalist system; they have not yet taken root in the capitalist system. The old framework of lifelong solidarity has not totally disintegrated; the new framework of capitalist individualism has not finished moving in. In this transition, attitudes, reflexes, choices and the values that sustain them remain tragically ambiguous.

After a long period of colonial capitalist domination, the attraction of the socialist system for Africa contributed to confusing further the system of values at the head of the African States. The nostalgic soul remains for a long time the prisoner of the precolonial cultural system, the economy remains for a long time rooted in the colonial capitalist system and for a long time all eyes continued to be focused on the values of the socialist system to be conquered. Several « fundamentals » of the three cultural systems were stacked and restacked, measured and arranged in multiple ways, in multiple compartments of a society engendered by the arbitrary and incoherent colonial system.

The majority of the earliest African political leaders seem to have strongly felt the presence of multicolored cultural systems in their states. Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Touré, Modibo Keita, Houphouët Boigny, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Alphonse Mossembe-Debat, Kenneth Kaunda, Agostino Neto, Thomas Sankara, Robert Mugabe, Nelson Mandela and many other African leaders were for a long time living witnesses and reluctant promoters of the ambiguous choices made at the head of the former colonies whose destinies they were responsible for directing and managing. At a cultural crossroads, it was difficult to ensure a stable majority around their political choices. There can be no possible political choice amid a profusion of reference frames. The multitude of cultures was in reality only a cultural vacuum. This is what seems to have swallowed up, in advance and amid general indifference visionary leaders who were constant in following their course. Patrice Lumumba, Sylvannus Olympio, Samora Machel, Amilcar Cabral and Modlane, among others who did not even have time to govern. Admittedly, the stealthy activities of external hostile forces have been determinant here and there, but they benefited greatly from indisputable internal inconsistencies typical of the proto-nations resulting from the arbitrary power of the colonial system.

5. STATUS OF ENTREPRENEURS AND MANAGERS

5.1. Diffuse cultural and political hostility

Very few African countries have an indigenous class of dynamic and powerful businessmen. The small and medium enterprise (SME) are almost everywhere in Africa, mainly in the hands of non-African aliens. Lebanese, Syrians, Pakistani, Greeks, Portuguese, Indians, Chinese... constitute, in proportions that vary from one African country to another, the bulk of the middle class in Africa. A small minority of indigenous entrepreneurs have been able here and there to set up businesses in their countries. But such businesses tend almost everywhere to be concentrated in the distribution, services and speculation sectors: land and real estate, light urban transport, petty trade based on door-to-door selling and representation, shops, small carpentry and tailoring workshops, garages, bakeries, butcher's shops, patisseries, small catering houses and commerce. On the other hand, the natives are marginalized almost everywhere in Africa in the areas of heavy investment. These activities include export agriculture, forestry and mining, hotel business, manufacturing, telecommunications and computers, banking and finance, air and river transport, railways, chemical and metalworking industries, mechanical workshops, food industries, quarries and public works, building industry and printing works.

Even in these few favourite sectors, the volume of business handled by the natives is generally very low, compared to the proportion of business controlled by aliens. Moreover, the rapidly changing economic situation in these sectors plays a part in rendering the activities precarious, the incomes unstable, the enterprises volatile and the initiatives timorous.

Small and medium scale industries (SMIs) are, with the exception of African countries that can be counted on one's fingertips (such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, the Maghreb countries, and Egypt), owned almost exclusively by foreign entrepreneurs. These are either individuals or groups with a higher financial standing, or big enterprises of colonial origin that have remained in the country, or recently established multinational businesses. In these sectors of heavy investment, indigenous entrepreneurs are undesirable intruders who the African rulers fear will eventually become so rich as to destabilize the precarious balance of the political institutions. Compared with the foreign entrepreneurs, these natives are supposed not to show as much "flexibility" and "generosity" towards the rulers in recognition of the kind protection they receive from the latter, or as compensation for the shares of official contracts that these leaders deign to sub-contract to them. In the government or the army, it is easier and often less risky to "do business" with foreign entrepreneurs than with the natives.

This prejudice against the indigenous business class has other harmful consequences. National laws do not provide many incentives and, as if by design, are highly restrictive. Access to information and credit is generally narrow and controlled. Taxes and quasi taxes are high, ill-suited and rigid. Administrative procedures are long and full of obstacles. Decisions of the courts and tribunals in commercial cases are generally vexatious, including their application and revision. Pretexts for blackmail, threats and ransom are numerous. Sub-contracting of official contracts is obtained in very expensive conditions, through long and ruinous processes. Competing enterprises of foreign origin often get a more sympathetic hearing.

An enterprise created (or owned) by a native lives constantly under the threat of dissolution. The threat comes from three sides: i) from the existing politico-legal system; ii) from the old colonial monopolies; iii) and from the local socio-cultural system.

Indeed, in practice, such an enterprise is hardly recognized as having a legal personality different from that of its indigenous founder (or manager): the minor offences of the individual in the deepest recesses of his private life are often turned into abominable crimes of the enterprise in its relations with the authorities. Any suspicion of “treason” against the promoter (or the manager) can be a sufficient reason for torpedoing the activities of the enterprise or for holding its assets to ransom and fragmenting, amputating or confiscating them. On any pretext and without risk, African Governments sometimes clearly and categorically refuse to honour their commitments towards the local enterprises. This pernicious result may be obtained through a legal procedure, by a very sustained media lynching or simulated violence by the political police.

By similar processes involving the use of official constraints or the recourse to villainous acts, some powerful colonial interests settle accounts with the enterprises belonging to natives who bother them.

Taking advantage of the public’s lack of sympathy for capitalist enterprises, some organized individuals and groups can destabilize with impunity a local enterprise in various ways: a wildcat strike manipulated from outside and with nothing at stake for the strikers, a complete sabotage of the facilities and equipment of an enterprise by its own workers, a mock trial in court leading to a verdict of bankruptcy or a condemnation to a sum beyond the corporate assets, an arbitrary decision of a husband against his wife who is the head of an enterprise, legal action involving succession directed against a widow who is the proprietress of an enterprise, settlement of the succession among several heirs after the death of a parent who is the proprietor of an enterprise, settlement of a conflict of interests between the indigenous partners of an enterprise, etc.

In all these cases and many other similar ones, enterprises established and run by natives are dissolved amidst widespread indifference, their assets are shared, their facilities are sold off, their capital is swallowed up in consumption, their workers are forced into unemployment, their claims and debts are written off, and their dream of conquest fades. With the death of each enterprise, the whole of society returns to square one.

5.2 Nonexistent indigenous business class

The result that is generally observed in this depressing climate is fivefold: i) reconversion of indigenous enterprises into precarious businesses operating in the underground of the informal sector; ii) cautious and non dynamic behaviour of nationals considering the establishment of enterprises; iii) an impressive number of bankrupt or abandoned indigenous enterprises; iv) a disturbing number of indigenous enterprises that never survive their founders; v) and scarcity of institutions for the supervision, financing and promotion of enterprises- small and medium – established and owned by natives.

With very few exceptions, there is hardly any business middle class in Africa.

Appearances are nevertheless deceptive in this respect. All over the continent, there exists this fake ceremonial bourgeoisie fabricated by the ruling classes. This eccentric bourgeoisie,

which is deliberately unstable, does not create itself; it is recruited, most often within the framework of ethnic, clan or regional solidarity. It survives through guaranteed income, preferential treatment, sub-contracts indulgently given and sometimes injections of fresh capital diverted from the public treasury.

In this complex African reality, can culture be in any way responsible? The answer, no doubt, is yes.

Indeed, behind the sudden changes of mood, the manoeuvres and the contortions of African leaders is hidden the passive complicity of all citizens, heavily leaning on the culture of lifelong solidarity and rather suspicious of anything that purports to be an expression of militant individualism. The initiatives of a few natives motivated by the « unbridled » search for personal profit, constitute a painful breach of the traditional system of lifelong solidarity. The latter – it must be recalled – is often based on the inclusive community nature of consumption. The production of profit and the individualistic ideal – which is its driving force – are therefore « revolutionary » and subversive in nature. They are inclined to destabilize the traditional socio-cultural balances. After the agony of colonial capitalism, they are all the more badly received in that the eyes and the hopes of the country proper are resolutely turned elsewhere: either towards the restoration of the traditional culture « for the sake of the dignity that has been trampled underfoot for a long time », or towards the distant and ethereal horizon of socialism, which seemed to carry new promises. In the collective imagination, independence supposedly had no other meaning.

The overwhelming majority of African States therefore remained in this position of cultural ambivalence for a long time, trapped by a waiting game. While the rulers were conjuring from nothingness five-year « development » plans and programmes to fill the vacuum, the countries accumulated external debts for oversized investments and pharaonic projects with doubtful returns, kept almost intact the monopolistic privileges of the colonial enterprises, dreamt of widespread prosperity and at the same time curbed the productivist enthusiasm of the embryonic local business class. Furthermore, the country's infrastructure, which was barely maintained and almost never renewed, continued to deteriorate. Farmlands and pastures turned into deserts and became scarce. Export revenue dwindled and import expenditure rose. Domestic needs increased under the combined influence of demography and changes in consumption patterns. Social demand expanded in terms of education for the youth, health care, gainful employment, food, sports and leisure, liberties and information, security and social welfare, etc.

Dependency and vulnerability of the economies thus worsened in almost all the African States, against the background of ever increasing domestic imbalances.

With the second « oil shock » (1982), implosion became inevitable in the vast majority of African States: shrinking external demand for Africa's major exports, drastic fall in export revenue, sudden revaluation of the currencies used in external transactions, inability to ensure the debt service, loss of credibility abroad and a sharp awakening at home to a « better world ». An economic and financial crisis, no doubt, but against the background of a profound societal crisis. The trap had completely closed on the peoples of Africa.

5.3. A crisis without solution in the foreseeable future

The shriveled embryo of the indigenous middle class is not capable of making any significant contribution to the solution of such a profound and multifarious crisis, at least in the short and medium term. Its status and role remain culturally and politically ill-defined. It will not play – as in Europe, America and Asia through the SMEs – this indispensable role as a buffer and shock absorber against the crisis (malleability of the structure, flexibility in relation to the economic situation, protection of employment, redeployments, reorientation of activities, protection of incomes, etc.)

The answer comes from elsewhere. The overwhelming majority of those forgotten by the post-colonial economy – these starving, weakened, indeed desperate people – have been proposing their solutions on a daily basis. Their aim is to engage increasingly in business and to better manage this lesser evil known as the informal economy. As a reason for engaging in business, lifelong solidarity will always be stronger here than the search for profit to be accumulated. The immediate future and the very short term will always prevail over the long term. What is produced here will always come from only the materials that are within reach. The social havoc caused by the official economy which continues to « readjust », will be offset here, at least partly. Talking about the informal economy, Jean Michel Kankan, a Cameroonian comedian, seems to have best described its nature and its limitations: « I do what I see, and I do not do what I do not see ».

The individual and collective disaster will therefore be contained at all costs. Faced with the pressure of the struggle for survival, millions of Africans fully deploy their imagination and efforts under the blanket of the informal economy, whose only merit is to reinvent the lives of individuals every second, but for a duration that does not go beyond the next second! As regards the lives of peoples and the survival of nations, all hopes are placed in the « stabilization programmes » and « structural adjustment programmes », but so far the result has only been extended depression, social misery and widespread despondency.

The issue of entrepreneurship and management in Africa cannot be properly tackled outside this particular framework. Moreover, it cannot be partially formulated, that is in terms of training and retraining. Thorough reforms – cultural and political – are required. They must go far beyond the ideological type and the technical training, which, as is now clear, are just a veneer.

This status of entrepreneurs and other managers should therefore be clearly redefined in a more or less coherent cultural system, which will be predominant in people's minds and at the highest level of the state. This can be done only under increasing pressure from the anxiety of collective survival: no African State is exempt from that.

6. PERSPECTIVES

6.1. The needed solution

The black continent is in an endless transition. The socio-cultural balances - as it has just been shown - are precarious and totally on a knife-edge. Somewhere Africa is in a crisis of its identity.

The status quo is repugnant to the vast majority who are suffering. The petty reforms tacked onto the unchanged structures of underdevelopment are more distressing than the status quo itself. The effect of the "Structural Adjustment Plans" obliged the continent to make a painful detour through temporary accounting balances. But Africa is still keeping the course towards a depressed economy, which has fallen behind in relation to the social demand, environmental requirements and the call of the future. The central issue is in terms of hope to be created: hope for each and every day. With the cohort of horrors and looting, wars are more and more frequent. They are, to a certain extent, a desperate response to a situation of stalemate.

Yet, one needs only to requestion history: the most ingenious solutions to a crisis start at the lowest ebb. Just before these solutions appear as a dot on the horizon, the most tenacious optimists begin to give up under the pressure of the calamities. These historic moments have one peculiarity: *they are thresholds for the breaking of continuities that can no longer cope with the exigencies of collective life.* As the crisis has reached its own critical mass at that point, all adventures are possible: collective suicide in an endless war among starving people or a vigorous recovery of destiny by a judicious exploitation of this uncontrollable energy of despair.

Any optimistic vision of the African tragedy tends towards that perspective. It is in that direction that the anxious call of the angry masses and the blocked youth is heard. It is the optimistic vision, therefore, that has inspired this paper.

Optimism must necessarily be accompanied by voluntarism. The optimistic view of the reality of the crisis should be completed by a commitment to work for a single way out of the crisis: it is the only way out toward survival and progress. Such a solution to the crisis is the only one that can be spontaneously legitimized for all cultures, without distinction. When? After the audit the latter are bound to undergo, in order to be in conformity with the changing demands of their own survival.

A relentless battle must therefore be launched against the ambiguity and the apathy that sap the potential for creativity and quality in management. In fact there is no challenge more important than collective survival, which is threatened throughout Africa. Therefore, culture has only one mission: to (painfully) take note of this deadly challenge, to review the nature, the contours and the implications, and to trigger the mobilization required today by survival and progress.

6.2. From shifts to a break

Today, two questions are inevitable. Why would Africans succeed better than in the past in the creation of enterprises and the management of the economy? How would they be able to break with cultural continuities in the fields of entrepreneurship and management?

The situation of widespread weakness in the areas of initiative, innovation and development management is undoubtedly better understood as the effect of the crisis on the lives of individuals and peoples is aggravated. Cultural continuities and their inertia become less justified and more intolerable each day. The youth, for whom the range of opportunities tends to close and whose hope in the future is waning, raises every day with increasing anxiety the question of a way out towards an improvement in living conditions and an increase in the opportunities for progress. The youth are pushing for a break of the cultural continuities, with greater chances of success every day. In fact the youth is increasing in numbers among the total population and everyday becoming more determined in the face of the worsening living conditions and the dwindling opportunities for progress.

Thus, awareness of the challenges continues to increase. The content and the implications of the distressing choices to be made are better known every day. The resistance and obstacles to these unavoidable rifts are better identified. There is a greater determination to take the risk and assume the responsibility for the salutary cultural breaks. In the present economic and social situation of the African continent, everything is pushing in that direction: unemployment, low income, increasingly difficult access to resources and basic social services, narrowing range of choices, increasing inequalities, collective powerlessness in the face of the numerous challenges of the ongoing globalization, etc. The will and the courage to shake up the traditional way of thinking and acting are strengthened by awareness of the challenges. In turn, this awareness increases with the worsening of the living conditions.

These developments are visible in the vast majority of the African countries particularly, within the young age group of the population. With the increasing poverty and urbanization, the traditional type of organic solidarity is becoming slack here and there. But above all, it is shifting from consumption to production. In other words, individuals tend to co-operate in the search for opportunities and in the production of goods and services, more than they have been inclined to do up to now. In the informal sector, the pressure of poverty seems to be already pushing toward this shift.

These developments are gradually leaving an imprint on people's perception of the economic challenges and the social universe. They are preparing bolder and more daring reforms in the cultural field. Although the militant individualism preached by the capitalist ideology is far from having succeeded in taking root in the majority of minds and reflexes in Africa, there seems to be growing tolerance vis-à-vis those who openly claim to be entrepreneurs working for their individual development, or for the accumulation of capital. Admittedly, antipathies are promptly revived during social conflicts in the enterprises; but a new equilibrium seems to be already established on the feeling of mutual acceptance, particularly in activities justified by the need for survival. Everybody manages where he can, when he can and as he can. Through the mechanisms of tontines, people even go beyond "mutual tolerance": new solidarities are created, resolutely geared to mutual aid in production. This new development has the misfortune of not being seen as long as it fits into the traditional forms of economic cooperation. On the other hand, it is noticed in more modern institutional forms.

As an example, one can mention the experiences of Rwanda, Cameroon and Benin in institutionalizing the tontines in the more suitable and less local form of “popular banks”. Such experiences are far from being widespread in the continent. They certainly have not yet achieved brilliant or confirmed successes. But they have the merit (and the novelty) of weighing up the challenges (which have both a local and a national dimension) and paving the way for reforms, which tend to be spreading in favour of so-called “micro-credit” institutions. Micro-credit represents an additional opportunity for entrepreneurship in Africa, particularly at the grassroots level. They also constitute a new challenge for the indigenous capacity to manage credit institutions financed mainly by local small savings. Finally, they represent a new institutional framework for participatory management: savers, recipients of credit and managers of these institutions are learning how to cooperate in a framework different from the traditional – lineage and clan - forms of economic cooperation.

Such “cultural shifts” are increasing and becoming more daring throughout the continent. The economic practices that sustain them and the management experiences that entrench them in minds and reflexes are laying the foundations for more decisive and widespread cultural breaks.

African experiences in the creation of SMEs are – one will recall – very rare, mostly limited to the short term and very timid. By their failures as well as their successes, they have nonetheless provoked “cultural shifts”, contributed to shaking up the “fundamentals” and the national “symbolisms” and thus hastened some cultural breaks.

It is therefore through these narrow and tortuous ways that radical cultural changes are becoming more probable every day, as regards entrepreneurship and management. These are “radical cultural changes” because, in the deep strata of the population, they affect the cardinal values of civilization and the symbolisms, reshape attitudes, and induce new reflexes. They are more probable today than forty years ago, at the time when the majority of the African countries attained independence. On the whole, Africa has more opportunities today than in the past.

Time is always needed for changes to take place.

6.3. A switchback process

The time that matures such changes is not the astronomical time measured by the number of days succeeding nights. It is the historical time measured in the number, weight and direction of the shocks that a system – « the cultural system » - receives from everywhere, to which it necessarily reacts in an adaptive way.

The shocks received by a socio-cultural system are never solved in advance in the same way. Therefore, the resultant cultural shifts, concomitant or successive, do not necessarily add up. Many of them always cancel each other out.

The process leading from "cultural shift" to "cultural break" is not in a straight line. On the contrary, it takes the form of a broken line, with forward and backward movements, successes and failures, ups and downs. Historical time is therefore measured by the intensity of shifts added up in a specific direction, without taking into account those that cancel each other out. It is therefore difficult to evaluate in astronomical time the distance that Africa has to cover

before the occurrence of the cultural breaks, which are made more necessary every day by the survival and progress of the continent.

Besides, regarding the historical time, such an event cannot occur at the same time or in the same form in all the countries of the continent. At the beginning of this new century – the 21st Century of the Christian era – the African countries are not generally committed in the same way concerning the development of entrepreneurial and managerial culture.

Let us take historically close examples: Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Zimbabwe has just started a phase of disqualification of a sizeable minority of its middle class – the white farmers. Some farmlands are being taken away from them in favour of an embryonic group of black farmers. The entrepreneurial capacity of the “whites” (in terms of cultural values, attitudes, reflexes, financial assets and networks of cooperation) is therefore being gradually extinguished. The rulers have deliberately chosen to rebuild this capacity from scratch, in the social and racial group that had spent a miserable century confined to tiny and unproductive lands.

This policy has a price, basically in terms of decline. With the farms of the whites will disappear large incomes from agricultural exports (about 450 million US dollars a year), hundreds of thousands of jobs, precious financial and commercial networks, part of the heavy facilities and equipment, and other advantages acquired in Zimbabwe. To this cost should be added the loss of expertise and the progress already achieved in terms of entrepreneurial culture, the unavoidable expenditure for the cultural and technical development of the embryonic group of new entrepreneurs as well as a substantial loss of profit on the agricultural and industrial market throughout the gestation period.

From another point of view, this Zimbabwean policy is not an act of gratuitous malice. It is meant to be a brave and reasonable gamble with the future. By redistributing landed property to a broader section of the population, the leaders perhaps hope to save from idleness the unused land in white compounds, to diffuse the resentment and social antagonism which are responsible for some of the inertia in the area of economic initiative, and to involve the black majority of the country in the culture of responsibility for economic progress.

But a gamble is still a gamble, i.e. a risky choice. Indeed there's the risk of making the economy slide into a very long decline and the population into new forms of inertia. Under Mobutu, Congo Kinshasa started to literally flounder as a result of the so-called “zairinization policy”. Farms and enterprises taken away from foreigners for the benefit of collaborators, clients and allies of the Kinshasa regime ended up being totally liquidated amid general indifference and irresponsibility, and even with vengeful applause from the majority of domestic opinion. In Uganda under Idi Amin Dada, a similar suicidal development took place with the nationalization during the 1970s of enterprises and farms belonging to a dynamic Indo-Pakistani diaspora that had been living in the country for decades. Examples of shifts ending in catastrophic decline are legion in independent Africa.

In a situation comparable to that of Zimbabwe, South Africa seems to have resolved to put an end to the social injustices and cultural inertia by attempting to “level at the top”. This means three things: i) to keep and even consolidate the progress already achieved by the country under the land use system and in the enlightened interest of the white minority; ii) to select and train in entrepreneurship and management techniques more and more citizens from races

and social groups formerly excluded by the apartheid regime; and, finally iii) to facilitate a gradual and peaceful access of a new class of indigenous entrepreneurs to landed property, facilities and the international cooperation networks.

The South African approach seems to give priority to controlled “cultural shifts” by stages leading to possible “cultural breaks”. However, it has a political cost: that of understandable impatience, persistent suspicions and even paralyzing inertia on the part of the excluded who have waited for centuries before the recognition, in words only, of simple attributes that they share with all human beings. The rejection of solidarity and ideologies that sustained the bloody apartheid system, will probably be reinforced. The enterprises – as well as the managers/entrepreneurs who symbolize the logic of profit and the ideology of exclusion – continue to be considered by the majority of the black population (about 83%), not as useful steps to take and models to follow for social advancement, but rather as weapons for their oppression. This feeling is nowadays rising in South African society, fed by the growing impatience and disappointment. The enterprise and, particularly, the farm have two opposite statuses in the same South African society: a legal status as a prestigious instrument of progress, and a socio-cultural status as a hideous weapon of repression and exclusion.

Today, the Zimbabwean model and the South African model seem to be at opposite ends. Between them are the other African countries where progress and decline succeed each other according to the rate at which Heads of State change, with each new government disqualifying some national entrepreneurs and industrialists for the benefit of a new group of more accommodating businessmen.

Africa seems to move up and down towards cultural breaks, and as if it has its “back tot the wall”. Africa’s march toward progress in creativity and management seems to be taking place reluctantly, mainly under the increasing pressure of challenges that threaten the survival of peoples and the progress of the proto-nations.

This is where the African situation calls for a voluntarist, cultural and political commitment to greater creativity, innovation and technical acumen in the fields of economic choices and development management.

6.4. For a voluntarist programme

As the “cultural shifts” add up everyday in the two opposite directions, voluntarist support plans for the process leading to “breaks” are essential. One of the objectives of this paper is to outline a proposed plan for entrepreneurship and development management in Africa.

The project to be presented is meant to contain only the guidelines of an action plan. Such a project is likely to be better understood if it endeavours to specify the target actors, contrary to the tradition in this field, which gives priority to the list of actions to be undertaken. As for the actions, only the broad outlines can be given; details about them depend on the concrete field programmes.

This paper deals successively with the role expected of – and the action be focused on: i) teachers and young people; ii) teenagers who are potential creators of enterprises and

development managers; iii) political leaders (in power and in the opposition); iv) the civil society (with opinion leaders in the front line).

6.4.1. Educators and the very young

The attitudes and reflexes oriented towards creativity and rationality are sustained by the prevailing culture. They are learnt very early, when one is young. Parents and teachers are, therefore, the first concerned in their capacity as educators of the youth. Before proposing the structure for such education, some relevant details must be given about the content of the values, attitudes and reflexes to be taught.

The values to be inculcated in the young generation are those that show life as it really is: a challenge and an endless test in the face of which imagination and constant effort are essential. A responsible attitude is therefore required in the choices that each individual or each group has to make. Creative anticipation and initiative are, in this regard, the best strategies, the best modalities for action: for the speed, effectiveness and efficiency of each action; creative anticipation and initiative must depend not on reflection but on reflex, that is to say the functional autonomy of habits. These must be at the heart of behavioural automatism.

For any choice, the ennobling and gratifying element remains the attitude in the face of risks, before and after the choice itself. Indeed, this attitude is one of the main elements of responsibility. In other words, an action is deemed to be based on responsibility if it implies, for the person who initiates and conducts it, an awareness of - and a free commitment to assume - all the risks inherent in the choice.

The major lesson is that: i) life is paved with challenges; ii) man assumes responsibility with every free choice; iii) existence cannot in anyway be justified by inactivity and shirking of responsibility; iv) in order to better conduct one's life, imagination and creative effort must always be in control; v) imagination and creative effort will definitely remain in control provided they are transformed into behavioural automatisms.

Whatever the "fundamentals" that culture imposes on people's minds as "cardinal values of civilization", whatever the purposes that religions assign to existence, the challenge of education for creativity and management can hopefully be won if these values and purposes do not impose detachment, fatalism and inactivity as the ideal modalities for conducting one's life. In fact, an attitude of detachment is tantamount to the rejection of life, either as torture, or as impiousness. Detachment regards existence as a footnote to life; it considers life as an unworthy adventure. Fatalism strips existence of the freedom of choice and its corollary, namely responsibility for one's acts. Finally, inactivity means the absence of commitment and rejection of all effort.

Why such content followed by so many details?

The answer is simple: Africa is still suffering, in these vital areas, from a deficiency inherited from four centuries of slavery and two centuries of colonization. Admittedly, the slave and the colonized person are not trained by their masters and their spiritual advisers to live in idleness, far from it. But detachment vis-à-vis life "on earth" (against the promise of eternal happiness in paradise!) and fatalism (in the face of events incidents and conflicts of interest which agitate life) constitute the two main pivots of any pro-slavery or colonial education

system, except that creative anticipation is widely recommended as a virtue in the proslavery and colonial systems, but exclusively to serve the masters.

For reasons of atavism, but also through the inertia of the prevailing cultures, religious precepts and education systems in Africa, the bulk of the pro-slavery and colonial conditioning is constantly passed on, generation after generation. There can never be creative initiative without personality, never personality without freedom of choice and responsibility for these choices, never a choice without a perception of life as a chain of challenges, as a permanent invitation to self-assertion.

Thus Africa cannot bind itself to the values of progress and the reflexes of creative anticipation - for itself – unless the spiritual advisers, namely the parents and the teachers, are educated in those values and reflexes. The personality of all the opinion leaders should be re-immersed in these values and reconditioned for these reflexes. Institutions such as the family, the school, the place of worship, the press and the cinema, must be targeted.

This paper chooses to focus on the African school, for simple reasons of ease and convenience. In fact the school is likely to be restructured with less difficulty. Moreover it covers a considerable number of youngsters at the ideal time when, in a person, the mind is awoken to the values and purposes of existence, attitudes take shape and begin to be consolidated, and reflexes become automatisms for the rest of one's life. Therefore, everything at school must aim at building the personality of the individuals in a direction that is favourable for commitment and responsibility. Changes are indispensable at different levels: i) the content of the cultural fundamentals and the purposes assigned to life; ii) the content of school curricula meant to translate them into reality; iii) the choice and the sequence of subjects taught; iv) the line of demarcation between theoretical and practical teaching, between the space of social conventions and that of free choices, between certainty and risk, between good and bad risks, etc.

For that the educator is, above any other actor, the main target of such a reform. Seminars, workshops, retraining and profiling courses for educators, headteachers and inspectors of basic schools, are some of the appropriate actions. They should be carried out in the framework of a flexible and progressive programme, taking into account the delicate nature of such an exercise avoiding the vague desires for propaganda or indoctrination, proceeding consciously by successive stages and aiming eventually at cultural breaks, i.e. by successive “cultural shifts” geared solely to the building of personality among the very young.

It is the level of the “basic school” (or primary education), which is involved here.

By building sonality, such a plan of action lays in the minds of the very young the very foundations on which will be based the theoretical knowledge and technical skills which are needed at the adult age in order to constantly be in action, innovate, and manage with the best guarantees of efficiency. Later, in these very young ones who have become teenagers, the knowledge and skills in the field of management will not come and land, like veneer, on top of a hostile background of values, purposes, attitudes and reflexes. On the contrary, adhesion and coherence between them will be guaranteed. As they have been since the bourgeois revolutions and the Reformation among teenagers of all European countries and all the lands of immigration in America. As they have been among the Japanese teenagers since the Meiji Revolution (1868). As they are beginning to be, with records that command admiration, among teenagers from Korea, India, China, Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia and Thailand.

It is not for lack of effort that the situation is different in Africa! On the contrary, considerable efforts have been made in almost all African countries. But, on the whole, they have been sprinkled on petty reforms, with programmes of action exclusively targeting adults, very often at the initiative of and with funding from the outside world, and without any guarantee that the resulting cultural shifts will add up in order to hasten the management revolution in the form of a cultural revolution affecting the whole society.

6.4.2 Teachers and Teenagers

After primary school, secondary and higher education constitutes another framework of action. At that stage, the very young from the basic school have become teenagers. They are bursting with energy. Their mental and social age lends itself to the most exuberant future dreams. Their voluntarism and generosity are at their flowering age, their mind is less sensitive to risk, the most open to action, and receptive to the call of every solidarity. No challenge seems impossible to take up, no difficulty unsolvable through effort.

It is at that age that knowledge about the innovation and management process is most likely to be brought under control. Theoretical knowledge is best assimilated by awoken cognitive faculties. At the same time, practical knowledge is best fixed in the attitudes and reflexes that are in the consolidation phase.

The best teaching method here would be to go from practice to theory, from individual business projects to a general reflexion on the implications of initiatives and the requirements of their management. Teenagers would literally “put their feet in it”. Each in the framework of his creative project, they will all have to navigate without instruments in the troubled waters of concrete realities and through the twists and turns of practical issues. Theoretical considerations will later throw light on the multiple practical difficulties, disentangle them, group them in logical categories and propose general solutions.

Such pedagogical processes may be new in Africa, but they are familiar in other continents or in fields of learning other than entrepreneurship and management. For example, in the United States, Canada, the Indian subcontinent and Australia, there are reports about concrete projects by teenagers to fix in their minds and in their reflexes general ideas on entrepreneurship and management. In many African countries, learning in the complex technical and high-tech areas (such as electronics, electricity, computer science, telecommunications, the internet etc.) is best done through a preliminary confrontation of learners with practical problems to be solved, the theoretical considerations coming later as a support. All Africans are full of admiration for the disconcerting ease with which teenagers solve practical problems in the leading technical sectors. Their intuitions concerning the nature of the technical problems, their adroitness and their precision in the manipulations command admiration more than the theoretical explanations about their practical work, which they are not always able to give.

Teachers of the second cycle of secondary and first cycle of higher education need to be put back in this context and retrained in the appropriate teaching techniques and methods. They teach over a period of six long years during which the « professionalization” of teenagers is prepared. Among the current curricula,, very few aim specially at a good grasp of knowledge and skills regarding entrepreneurship and management. There are even countries such as the

two Congos and Cameroon, where the number of trained agronomists is at least five times the number of commercial entrepreneurs. It is high time such proportions were reversed in the interest of development.

Evaluation seminars on teaching programmes are periodically organized for all levels, from the second cycle of secondary to the first cycle of higher education. This paper suggests a work plan aimed at two basic reforms: i) restructuring of teaching with a view to including the common core syllabus, the theoretical and practical aspects of project ideas and management; ii) introduction, where they do not exist yet, of new technical and managerial subjects aimed at providing special training for specialized professions: farmers, grocers, bakers, hotelkeepers, and public relations agents.

In a nutshell, this paper suggests four areas of activity; i) in order to strengthen the skills of teenagers in entrepreneurship and development management, to organize for teachers and development experts, seminars for a critical analysis of the existing curricula; ii) to prepare, where necessary, alterations of programmes in order to introduce (or strengthen) knowledge and skills in these areas; iii) to popularize and promote the decided reforms as well as the results of the pilot institutions in these fields; iv) to ensure the regular follow-up and periodical evaluation of the results in the teaching institutions and in the field

6.4.3. Adult Entrepreneurs and Managers

African countries have an appreciable wealth of true entrepreneurs and quality managers. Around this thin core are thousands of graduates from management schools, from well-known universities and institutions in the western world as well as national management schools.

It is in this group of adults working in the field that deficiencies are constantly reported, deficiencies thought to be related to some disconnection between technical knowledges and the cultural background supposed to sustain it. Here also, action should be taken to improve efficiency in the field.

There is the need for retraining activities targeted at managers of the enterprises and administrations. These activities have several dimensions: i) to collect, through appropriate field studies, data on obstacles and difficulties that the managers face; ii) to strengthen the technical knowledge already acquired in the fields of entrepreneurship and management; and iii) to try to reconcile the technical knowledge and the cultural background and increase their effectiveness.

Such a project can be designed and implemented in close collaboration with the interested enterprises and administrations.

6.3.4. Political Leaders

The issue of creative initiative and development management represents a real national and continental challenge. The necessary reshaping of the socio-cultural systems by successive shifts implies that, at one level or another, the political leaders should be involved.

This can be done through several actions targeted at the political circles: i) constant lobbying for the easing of laws and regulations that have the effect of discouraging or even eliminating local entrepreneurship; ii) lobbying for the strengthening of laws and regulations that have the effect of encouraging local potential investors to create and constantly innovate, and to protect their savings; iii) lobbying for the creation of appropriate economic courts whose main objective would be to protect enterprises as “social assets”, whatever the political affiliations, ethnic origins, ideas, sex, or criminal liabilities of those who manage these enterprises or are the founders ; iv) lobbying against the practice of decisions and rulings by the courts imposing on enterprises fines that are multiples of their assets ; v) lobbying for taxes and customs tariffs compatible with the recapitalization of national economies through local creative initiatives.

The forms of the different lobbying activities are infinitely diverse. Nevertheless, it should be specified that the targeted political institutions are as follows: governments, parliaments, administrative staff of political parties (in the government and in opposition); traditional political institutions (which often have the sad privilege of supporting customary social laws that favour the fragmentation of the enterprises of deceased founders or of women in who are disagreement with their husbands, etc.)

6.4.5 Institutions of the Civil Society

African entrepreneurship basically suffers at the hands of the civil society. Indeed, the latter represents the matrix of two main types of solidarity that lead to two main cultural systems, which are often the same as regards the legitimacy of economic activities. The inertia and paralysis resulting from this dualism have been examined in detail above. It is essentially the dynamics of entrepreneurship that suffers on account of it.

The main institutions of the civil society should therefore be targeted for any action for the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Among them are: i) the opinion leaders (religious denominations and traditional authorities, associations of craftsmen disseminating ideas through songs and drama, written and oral press, etc.); ii) workers’ and employers’ unions, various mass movements (youth, women, mutual aid associations, etc.); iii) different clubs of managers.

There is the need for sensitization activities; they can be manifold and involved many techniques of communication, depending on the social field. But there is one measure, the potential efficacy of which needs to be highlighted here: the creation of “clubs of managers” and of a “local section of the employers' union”, bringing together all the indigenous entrepreneurs. These organizations will guarantee a fruitful exchange of experiences between indigenous entrepreneurs and managers; they will be very useful lobbies for indigenous businessmen who need them most; finally, they will echo throughout the civil society the wishes of all indigenous entrepreneurs who face specific challenges.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the purpose of the plan of action outlined in this paper is to help Africa to meet the challenge of entrepreneurship and development management. It proposes landmarks,

which add up and lead to the culture of entrepreneurship. More concretely, it envisages actions in favour of the very young but targeted at educators; it recommends other appropriate measures in favour of the teenagers but targeted at teachers; it proposes yet another set of measures for the promotion of national entrepreneurship but targeted at political institutions; finally, it envisages action strategies aimed at the very heart of the civil society.

The whole of this strategy is a structure based on two assumptions: i) African traditional cultures are based on lifelong solidarity with a strong whiff of incompatibility in relation to the individualisms of exclusion; ii) unavoidable cultural shifts can be found everywhere and at all times, canceling out each other and adding up in general movement, which tends towards possible cultural breaks.

Let us add here, to conclude, that these breaks are unforeseeable as regards regarding the moment of their occurrence and even their specific content.

But one thing is certain: it is from these new centres of convergence that all social actions will derive their justification and draw their dynamics.

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